

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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R 181644Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1357

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SO, UR

SUBJECT: TASS ON SOMALI BASE

1. TASS (KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, JUNE 18) PORTRAYS THE "FALSE RUMORS" OF A SOVIET MILITARY BASE IN SOMALIA AS AN EXAMPLE OF PENTAGON "DISINFORMATION" DESIGNED TO DIVERT WORLD OPINION FROM "DANGEROUS" AMERICAN PLANS TO EXPAND THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN VIA DIEGO GARCIA. A SECOND STORY DATED MOGADISCIO REPORTS AN INVITATION TO "MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESS" BY SIAD TO VISIT SOMALIA TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT THERE ARE NO FOREIGN MILITARY BASES IN HIS COUNTRY. FONMIN GHALIB LABELED STORIES TO THE CONTRARY AS "REFLECTING THE USUAL METHODS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF AMERICAN PROPAGANDA." NEITHER STORY IS CARRIED BY

OTHER MAJOR DAILIES.

2. COMMENT: SOVIET PUBLIC REACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS, AS MOSCOW APPARENTLY WANTS TO AVOID GETTING INVOLVED IN DISPUTE WITH THE U.S. AND SEEMS CONTENT TO LET THE SOMALIS CARRY BURDEN OF ATTEMPTING TO SPIKE THE STORY. THE SOVIETS FACE A DILEMMA. THOUGH IDEOLOGICALLY UNABLE TO ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF A "BASE," THEIR OCCASIONAL PAST PRACTICE OF ISSUING DIRECT DENIALS (E.G., MERS EL KHEBIR IN 1968 AND MORE RECENTLY LIBYA) IS RISKY IN THE FACE OF WIDELY DISSEMINATED EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE CHARGES. FOR THE MOMENT, MOSCOW'S FIRSTLINE OF DEFENSE SEEMS TO BE TO RIDE OUT THE STORM IN HOPES THAT THE WORLD WILL LOSE INTEREST.
MATLOCK

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